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Socialist  
Dumont, Rene  
Socialist  
Fidel

# Veteran French Leftist Scores 'Economic

By PAUL BETHEL

## 'Chaos' in Cuba

A remarkable book that examines in detail the mismanagement, chaos and human misery that has been visited on Cuba during 10 years of Castro-Communist rule hit the stands in 1970. The book, *Cuba: Is It Socialist?*, is the work of agronomist Rene Dumont, a veteran French leftist who has advised the Castro regime off and on for the past decade.

It created a sensation in Europe (while being virtually ignored in the U.S.) because the picture Dumont paints comes from a friend of the bearded dictator. The book has special significance in the light of Castro's annual New Year's message to the Cuban people.

This New Year's eve, accompanied by brother Raúl and Labor Minister Jorge Risquet, Fidel Castro blistered the Cubans for "...vagrancy, parasitism, expressions of ideological weakness..." Youth came in for its share of criticism, as well, with Raúl Castro admitting that 400,000 children between the ages of six and 16 were neither going to school nor working for Cuba's Communist regime. This complaint is an old one, often repeated and invariably ignored by the youth.

Part of the reason for the resistance of Cuba's youth to communism is the knowledge that the leaders do not, as Dumont writes, "practice austerity in their own lives."

The Frenchman contrasts "the ladleful of corn cooked in water which is predominant in the meals of the young people of the *Columna*" [sugar cane workers] with the diet of Castro's "new class." "On the tables of high officials," writes Dumont, "one finds chicken and rice, avocados, cigars and coffee."

The contrast between the elite in Castro's Cuba and the suffering Cuban people is apparent to youth in other ways, as Dumont writes of "children dressed in odds and ends of old sacks, and young girls ashamed of their rags."

The disenchantment of Cuban youth with communism is deep and abiding as Guido García Inclán (a mouthpiece of the regime, shouted on Radio Progreso, Oct. 27, 1969: "The youth refer to our Central Park as Miami! Why? Because they want to be in Miami... that is their environment. It is time we cleaned house. Youths wear revolutionary uniforms but they refuse to go to school."

Again, last September 2, García Inclán followed up with another attack on Cuba's rebellious youth, saying: "Dissension, failure to get to work on time, difficulties always raised by them when they reach military age... doing things they should not be doing... youths always have a derisive joke to make against our revolution... and, when they have to work, they produce their membership cards in the CDE." The CDE are "committees for the defense of education," indicating that even those entrusted by the government to inform on their idle classmates are unfaithful to that trust.

Dumont dismisses as evidence of support of Castro the massive rallies, writing: "In public, apparently everyone is for Fidel; in private his partisans are much less numerous." He refers to "obligatory" attendance at the *Plaza de la Revolución*, but notes that trucks transporting this "spontaneous" crowd dare not stop en route "because many people slip away."

The Castro regime sometimes sells melons or oranges at Castro rallies to induce the crowd to stay. But Dumont notes: "During the main speech the sale must be suspended and the people who draw near the pot of gold grow angry. 'One hundred years of struggle' says the propaganda; 'plus 10 years of lies,' add the people."

The growing restiveness of the crowds was in part responsible for the small gathering addressed this New Year's eve—1,800 labor representatives from Havana who met in closed session in Havana's Chaplin Theater. Last year Castro used his immense effort to produce 10 million tons of sugar as a pretext for postponing Christmas and Epiphany (January 6) until July. This year, without pretext, these Christian holidays were again ignored with the implication that no longer will a Communist Cuba observe religious events.

In any event, Labor Minister Risquet and the Castro brothers apparently felt more at ease in addressing a picked audience in closed session than at a huge rally. More surprising is that the address was not televised nor broadcast live and the burden of what was said was given out later. Among what was said was a youth who, he thundered, "neither work

nor study," into what he called "school-work centers."

The New Year's eve meeting revealed once again that those living in Havana will have to go out in the fields to harvest Cuba's sugar crop. And the military, which Raúl Castro said, "cut one sugar stalk out of every five harvested in 1970," must perform agricultural tasks again in 1971.

Cuba, in pre-Castro days, had a surplus of agricultural workers. Yet, according to Labor Minister Risquet, the Province of Las Villas alone has a shortage this year of "more than 27,000 sugar cane workers."

The *Habañeros* and the population of other urban centers are expected to take up this slack—along with youths who must work 90 days each year in agriculture, the army and the more tightly controlled Communist organizations (Federation of Cuban Women, for example).

Why the *guajiro* (Cuban peasant farmer) is not producing for the regime is explained by Frenchman Dumont, who writes that the *guajiro* has been double-crossed. Instead of receiving a plot of land as promised under Cuba's agrarian reform, he hears Castro, in Dumont's words, "condemning the *microfundis*, or small, peasant-owned farming." Castro's theories, says Dumont, "kept him from taking advantage of peasant experience..." In short, the disgusted peasant simply refuses to work.

Dumont points out the cost to Castro

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